



## CASE STUDY 4

# SAM GETS AHEAD WITH YOUTH APPRENTICESHIPS SCHEME

**G**etting a head start in an electrical career is the big plus of the Youth Apprenticeships Scheme for Aotea College head boy Sam Henare.

“For me, this year’s really about getting the real-world skills and experience I need for an electrical apprenticeship while I’m still at school – and, so far, it’s looking like I’m on track,” says Sam.

Sam, 17, is one of seven students taking part in the scheme’s first year at the decile-5 secondary school in north-west Wellington. Together, the school’s Youth Apprenticeships Scheme learners are exploring engineering, plumbing, baking, hairdressing and electrical and motor engineering.

Sam’s big driver is to eventually use his trade to travel overseas and do aid work in poor communities where there’s a high demand for electricians.

He’s keen to leave Aotea College at the end of the year with his National Certificate in Educational Achievement (Levels 1 to 3) and enough unit standards under his belt to start a four-year electrical technology apprenticeship and continue his National Certificate in Electrical Engineering.

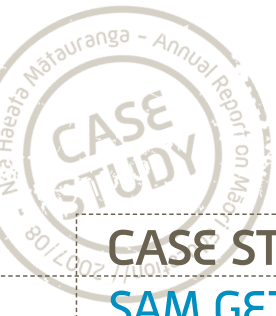
“It sounds a lot. But everything is fitting together well. I’m really enjoying building on my NCEA while working towards my apprenticeship.”

“The immediate challenge, for me, is catching up on my school work. But my teachers are great; they understand where I’m at. They’ve said they’ll be there if I need any extra help,” says Sam.



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Year 13 student Sam Henare (Ngāpuhi) and Elite Door Services’ employee and mentor Jacob Taylor (Ngāti Porou).



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Sam's employer, Paul Kay, an Elite Door Services' director, is delighted to be part of Aotea College's Youth Apprenticeships Scheme, seeing the scheme as an excellent opportunity for employers and students alike.

"I see this as a huge step forward to be honest. It has the potential to help employers plug the skills shortages out there and, from what I can see, it lets students go out and have a look at an industry to see if they like it – which is good for employers too. It's potentially an early reality check."

Paul says he hopes schemes like this will help change attitudes among parents who see the trades as a low-quality career choice for their kids.

"I don't think people realise what we are paying for the trades right now. I don't think they realise how much learning is involved in developing a trades career either," says Paul.

The Youth Apprenticeships Scheme was launched in 20 schools in 2008 and will be rolled out to more schools in 2009.

The scheme offers schools the opportunity to knit together a range of related programmes such as the popular work-experience programme Gateway and the Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource, which gives students a chance to take part in tertiary education relevant to a particular industry or interest. Careers programmes and funding such as the Career Information and Guidance Grant are also being integrated into the scheme by some schools.

Aotea College Gateway coordinator and vocational studies dean Sue Roberts (Ngāti Kahungunu) runs the scheme, alongside Gateway administrator Anne Taylor (Ngāti Porou). This year, they've set it up for students in years 12 to 13 who're particularly keen on combining classroom, workplace and industry-based learning.

For example, Sam, of Ngāpuhi descent, spends one day a week with his employer learning to be an electrician. In practice, that means joining Elite Door Services' employee Jacob Taylor (Ngāti Porou) out in the field as Jacob's assistant. The rest of the

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week he spends in class doing his regular ICT, classical studies, performing arts and physical education lessons and juggling his head boy, church and sporting commitments.

Recently, Sam completed a Level 2 electrical industry engineering paper at his local polytech, coming top in his class and making good progress towards completing his national certificate.

For one week, during his Term 4 holidays, Sam was employed and paid as an Elite Door Services electrical apprentice – a major component of the new scheme.

Sue and Anne say the scheme, at their school, is for students who are keen to commit to making it a success – it's no easy option. Yet, the rewards are huge for students who get through the school's rigorous application process, have the prerequisite NCEA Level 1 literacy and numeracy qualifications, manage the workload and fulfil their weekly work and training commitments.

Paul Craven, training manager for the Electrical Technology Industry Training Organisation, says the same high standards apply to an electrical apprenticeship. "Apprentices work hard at their education," he says.

"Apprentices are on a very steep learning curve. It's demanding. They're assessed, they do a minimum of six hours of study a week for three years, plus they do two major external exams."

"It's hard, they're on the job working and learning for 40 hours. Then they hop in the car for half an hour to get to night class and they're there for another three hours. They know before they go back next week that they've got at least another three hours of study to do as homework before they can go back to class. It's full on," says Paul.

Over time, Sue and Anne would like to take the scheme a step further by building a Youth Apprenticeships pathway that starts in year 10 and progresses through to year 13.

"Ultimately, the Youth Apprenticeships Scheme is helping us engage and motivate our students and redefine what it means to be successful at school," says Anne.

She says it's great to see the passion for learning among each of the school's seven students who are part of the Youth Apprenticeships Scheme.

"We want to encourage students to maintain that feeling, that enthusiasm for learning. It's part of our aim of developing lifelong learners, where students integrate their developing interests, their school education, as well as their aspirations beyond school – that's where schemes like this can be extremely powerful."

